SPEECH

BY THE

HON. EDWARD BLAKE

(M.P. FOR THE SOUTH RIDING OF BRUCE)

AT AURORA.

Delivered October 3rd, 1874, on the occasion of a Meeting of the Reform Party of North York.

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Hon. Edward Blake, on rising, was received with hearty and prolonged applause. He said—

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—You will allow me to add my congratulations to those of the previous speakers upon the happy circumstances under which you are to-day assembled, and to express my own feeling of rejoicing that the first occasion upon which I have been permitted to address the electors of this historic riding, should be that of the celebration of an event not unimportant in your own annals or in those of Canada at large—the victory which has brought back to the standard around which it had rallied so many years the united Liberal party of this riding. I recollect the political history of this constituency for a good many years. Up to the year 1871, when we made our calculations as to the probable results of a general election, there was never any doubt or hesitation as to what might be the verdict of North York, but from 1871 to the late election all this was changed, and I am very glad indeed, that a riding which had in the past played the part North York has played, should have by a very decisive majority restored its fair name and fame, and brought itself once more into good standing amongst the Liberal constituencies of Canada.

(Cheers) My friend, Mr. Mowat, who has spoken, has given you a very interesting account of the finances, and a terse but clear statement of the general course of legislation of the Province since the accession to office of the Liberal party. I do not propose to touch upon those topics at all. I desire simply to say, that having been for the last two years an observer, though not so close an observer as before, of the course, administrative and legislative, of the Provincial Government—without pretending to be able to form an accurate judgment as to all the petty details in respect of which my friends have been accused, being obliged, in fact, to confess to you frankly that I have never had the time to enter into the calculations necessary to come to a conclusion whether or not they paid too much for the fence around the Parliament Buildings—(laughter and applause)—yet, speaking of larger matters, which are fit to occupy the attention of an intelligent people, the general course of administration and legislation has been such as to commend itself to my poor judgment, and in my belief to entitle that Government to the confidence, the respect, the affection, and the continued support of the people of this Province. (Cheers.) With reference to the questions which are likely to come before the country at no distant time, some of these, as my friend Mr. Dymond remarked to you, are in such a position that they may not, to the public advantage, be at this instant discussed. There is, for example, a question which is of extreme importance to the people of this country. I refer to the negociation for a Reciprocity Treaty now pending. (Hear, hear.) Without, in the slightest degree, presuming to set up my judgment against that of those who have thought it to the public advantage to discuss the draft Treaty at this time, I confess I never have been able to agree in that view, and for this reason:—You are aware that the question, whether this draft shall be agreed to or

rejected, is to be discussed and disposed of by the Senate of the United States next December, and it seems to me that every argument that may be used just now in Canada in favour of that Treaty, by those who do favour it, is an argument calculated more or less to damage the chances of its approval by the Senate, who will, I fancy, look at it from the exactly opposite point of view. On the other hand, with reference to those Canadians whose opinion is against the Treaty, all the arguments they use, all the meetings they convene, all the resolutions they pass, seem to me to be so many invitations to the Senate of the United States to pass the Treaty, and take that step at any rate towards the consummation which they are deprecating all the time. (Hear, hear.) Therefore it appears to me inexpedient for either side to discuss it now, but I quite agree that it is a question which will, at the proper time, demand at the hands of the representatives of the people the fullest consideration and the most exhaustive discussion. I think the general principles upon which our judgment is to be formed are not far to seek. We shall have to consider, in case we be given the opportunity of passing upon the question, whether the document is one which will, as a whole, without doing gross injustice to any important interest, tend to the general advantage of this country. We are to take, not indeed an undistinguishing, but at the same time a broad view of that question, and we are to decide it freely for ourselves. I entirely demurred to the line of action taken outside and in Parliament with reference to the Treaty of Washington. I insisted that Parliament ought to be perfectly free, since the question was remitted to it, to determine whether the acceptance or the rejection of its terms was in the interest of the country. What I said then I now repeat, and I am sure it will be found when Parliament does meet, should this question be brought before us, that the large

majority which sustains the Government will be disposed to deal with it upon that basis only. I regret, under these circumstances, that at a recent assemblage of the Liberal-Conservative party, so-called, of this Province, a party platform was enunciated, a party line taken with reference to this Treaty, and it surprised me not a little to see that while their Press earnestly denounced the supposition that it was to be made a party measure on the Ministerial side, they should have been first in solemn convention assembled, to take a party line on the other. Those who have preceded me have referred at some length to the actions of the past. I desire to say something of the present and the future, illustrated, it may be, by the reference to the past; and I turn to another question of very great practical importance—the present position of the Pacific Railway matter. You will have observed that when the Government, of which I was then a member, undertook to deal with that question, their policy was enunciated in distinct terms to the electors before the late appeal, and that policy was most unequivocally approved, first at the polls and subsequently in Parliament. (Hear, hear.) I see that a deputation has been sent to England; that the people of British Columbia—no, not the people of British Columbia, for I do not believe they, as a body, sympathize with these extreme views—that the Government of British Columbia has sent a deputation to England, urging that some measure should be taken to force the Government and people of this country to do more than has been proposed with reference to that Railway. We (last session) took the unpleasant step of very largely increasing the rate of your taxation, in order to provide funds towards the fulfilment, so far as practicable, of this and other obligations imposed on you by the late Government. Every man among us is now paying one-sixth more taxes than before in order to this end. Parliament has agreed that the work shall

be done just as fast as it can be done without further burdening the people of this country, and I believe that the step thus taken is a very long step on the part of the people of this country in redemption of the pledge given to British Columbia. At the period when terms were proposed to British Columbia, which her rulers did not see fit to accept, I had ceased to be a member of the Canadian Government. Those terms, in my opinion, went to the extreme verge, and demonstrated the existance of an earnest desire to do everything which could be--with any show of reason--demanded, and I should very much regret if any attempt were made to entangle the country further, or arrange for the commencement and prosecution of the work more rapidly than is involved by the terms so offered, and the large provision which we made by the increase of taxation last session. We are called upon to commence the work immediately. I do not know that I can point out to you more strikingly the rashness—the insanity of the bargain thrust upon you by your late rulers, than by telling you that the abandoned line of the Fraser—abandoned early because it was thought by the engineers to be so expensive and difficult as to be impracticable—has been returned to, as affording the prospect of a better line than those upon the exploration of which such large sums have been expended. And this is the state of things long after the railway should, under the bargain, have been begun. We are asked to begin at once, though we cannot yet find a route, and while a mistake in the choice may involve an extra expenditure not only of many millions in the first cost, but of annual millions more in the running of the road. (Hear, hear.) Untill these surveys are thoroughly completed, and until we have found the least impracticable route through that inhospitable country, that "sea of mountains," it is folly to talk of commencing the work of construction. Speaking conjecturally, I am of opinion that the British Columbia section of the railway, even if it turns out to be practicable as an engineering work, will involve an enormous

expenditure, approximating to $36,000,000, and after its completion will involve an enormous annual charge on the revenues of the country for its running expenses; and I doubt much if that section can be kept open after it is built. I think the chief advantage the British Columbians will derive from the enterprise will consist in the circulation of money and the profits of mercantile operations attendant on the construction, and that Canada will be a frightful loser by the affair. Now, even under these circumstances, the fact that the population of British Columbia is only some 10,000 altogether, representing, perhaps, not so many householders as the audience I now see before me, ought not to disentitle them to say—"You shall fulfil your bargain or release us from our bonds." It is their right to take such a course, if they think fit, but I deny that this is any reason why we should plunge this country into ruin by the attempt. I have some reason to believe that these people are sufficiently sensible and reasonable to recognize and act on the truth of the matter, unless, indeed, they are sustained by agitators in this country, who are willing, for the sake of creating an embarrassment to the Government, to excite false and delusive hopes among them. The temper of Parliament you may judge from the fact that during last session an amendment was moved by one of the British Columbia members insisting upon an early prosecution of the work in that Province, but he was sustained by five members only—two or three from his own Province, and a couple of those whom my friend Mr. Mowat delights to call Ontario Tories. (Laughter.) If under all the circumstances the Columbians were to say—"You must go on and finish this railway according to the terms or take the alternative of releasing us from the Confederation," I would —take the alternative! (Cheers.) I believe that is the view of the people of this country, and it may as well be plainly stated, because such a plain statement is the very thing which will prevent the British Columbians from making such extravagant demands. If these 2,000 men understand that the people of Canada

are prepared, in preference to the compliance with their ruinous demands, to let them go, and to leave them to build the Columbia section with their 10,000 people, their tone will be more moderate, and we shall hear no talk about secession. The principal person indeed who has spoken of it hitherto is Sir John A. Macdonald, who almost invited it in his election speech during the late contest. They won't secede; they know better. Should they leave the Confederation, the Confederation would survive, and they would lose their money. [Laughter.] With regard to those sections of the railway which involve the communication between our interior seaboard and the great North-west, the utmost diligence is being used to put them under contract. I go heart and soul for the construction of these lines as rapidly as the resources of the country will permit, in conjunction with an extensive scheme of immigration and colonization. The work of construction in itself will afford very great facilities for the rapid colonization of those territories; the annual cash expenditure in labour will produce attractions enabling us to a considerable extent to people the land. The interests of Canada at large point very promptly to a speedy settlement of that country. In my own humble belief the future of Canada as a distinct State, the representative of British power on this continent, largely depends upon our success in colonizing that region, and what is equally important, and perhaps more difficult, on our success in retaining its sympathies, its trade, its commerce afterwards. Fertile as is the soil, great as are the resources, glorious as are the prospects with reference to production, it is certain that the distance from the great markets of the world of the inland portions of that country will form one great difficulty to be overcome. You have read of the war which is going on between the farmers and the railways in the Western States, the attempt which is being made to cut down freights by legislation. But I do not find that those railways are getting very rich. The fact is the war is a war against distance; it is a war against time and space; and that is

the war the farmers of the North-west will have to encounter. We ought to help as far as possible the successful prosecution of that war, and to that end we must do what was so much ridiculed during the late campaign—we must improve the water communications of the North-west; you can carry by water for one-fifth of the cost by rail, and you may be able to carry at a profit if you can get water communication when it would not pay you to grow wheat to be shipped by rail. [Hear, hear.] This is the more important because new sources of supply are opening now to England, and it is likely that the price of breadstuffs will rather fall than rise. I look on the success of our enterprises in the settlement of the North-west as practically dependent upon the improvement of the water ways. Of course, there must be railways at once to connect the sheets of water, and eventually a through line; but I am confident that a bushel of wheat will never go to England over an all-rail route from the Saskatchewan to the seaboard, because it would never pay to send it. We must take it in the speediest and cheapest way to the head of Lake Superior, where our splendid St. Lawrence route commences; and we must use every effort to avert the threatened danger of a diversion to the States of the trade relations of that country. Let me turn to another question which has been adverted to on several occasions, as one looming in the not very distant future. I refer to the relations of Canada to the Empire. Upon this topic I took, three or four years ago, an opportunity of speaking, and ventured to suggest that an effort should be made to reorganize the Empire upon a Federal basis. I repeat what I then said, that the time may be at hand when the people of Canada shall be called on to discuss the question. Matters cannot drift much longer as they have drifted hitherto. The Treaty of Washington produced a very profound impression throughout this country. It produced a feeling that at no distant period the people of Canada would desire that they

should have some greater share of control than they now have in the management of foreign affairs; that our Government should not present the anomaly which it now presents—a Government the freest, perhaps the most democratic in the world with reference to local and domestic matters, in which you rule yourselves as fully as any people in the world, while in your foreign affairs, your relations with other countries, whether peaceful or warlike, commercial, financial, or otherwise, you may have no more voice than the people of Japan. This, however, is a state of things of which you have no right to complain, because so long as you do not choose to undertake the responsibilities and burdens which attach to some share of control in these affairs, you cannot fairly claim the rights and privileges of free-born Britons in such matters. But how long is this talk in the newspapers and elsewhere—this talk which I find in very high places, of the desirability, aye, of the necessity of fostering a national spirit among the people of Canada, to be mere talk? It is impossible to foster a national spirit unless you have national interests to attend to, or among people who do not choose to undertake the responsibilities and to devote themselves to the duties to which national attributes belong We have been invited by Mr. Gladstone and other English statesmen—notably by Mr. Gladstone, in the House of Commons, very shortly before his Government fell, to come forward, Mr. Gladstone, speaking as Prime Minister of England, expressed the hope he cherished that the Colonies would some day come forward, and express their readiness and desire to accept their full share in the privileges and in the responsibilities of Britons. It is for us to determine—not now, not this year, not perhaps during this Parliamentary term, but yet at no distant day—what our line shall be. For my own part I believe that while it was not unnatural, not unreasonable, pending that process of development which has been going on in our new and sparsely

settled country, that we should have been quite willing—we so few in numbers, so busied in our local concerns, so engaged in subduing the earth and settling up the country—to leave the cares and privileges to which I have referred in the hands of the parent State; the time will come when that national spirit, which has been spoken of, will be truly felt amongst us, when we shall realize that we are four millions of Britons who are not free, when we shall be ready to take up that freedom, and to ask what the late Prime Minister of England assured us we should not be denied—our share of national rights. To-morrow, by the policy of England, in which you have no voice or control, this country might be plunged into all the horrors of a war. It is but the other day that, without your knowledge or consent, the navigation of the St. Lawrence was ceded forever to the United States. That is a state of things of which you may have no right to complain, as long as you choose to say, "We prefer to avoid the cares, the expenses and charges, and we are unequal in point of ability to discharge the duties which appertain to us as free-born Britons;" but while you say this, you may not yet assume the lofty air, or speak in the high-pitched tones which belong to a people wholly free. The future of Canada, I believe, depends very largely upon the cultivation of a national spirit. We are engaged in a very difficult task—the task of welding together seven Provinces, which have been accustomed to regard themselves as isolated from each other, which are full of petty jealousies, their Provincial questions, their local interests. How are we to accomplish our work? How are we to effect a real union between these Provinces? Can we do it by giving a sop now to one, now to another, after the manner of the late Government? By giving British Columbia the extravagant terms which have been referred to; by giving New Brunswick $150,000 a year for an export duty which cannot be made out as worth more than $65,000 a year? Do you hope to create or to preserve harmony and good feeling upon such a false and sordid and mercenary basis as that? Not so! That

day, I hope, is done forever, and we must find some other and truer ground for Union than that by which the late Government sought to buy love and purchase peace. We must find some common ground on which to unite, some common aspiration to be shared, and I think it can be found alone in the cultivation of that national spirit to which I have referred. (Cheers.) I observe that those who say a word on this subject are generally struck at by the cry that they are practically advocating annexation. I believe that the feeling in the neighbouring Republic has materially changed on this subject, and that the notions which were widely spread there some years ago, and the desires to possess, as one Republic, under one Government, the whole of this continent, from north to south, have died away. A better and a wiser spirit, I believe, now prevails—largely due, perhaps, to the struggles which are unhappily occurring in that country. The attempt to reorganize the South has been going on for some years, and owing, I think, to a very great error in judgment as to the way in which it should be effected, it has been largely a failure. There is great difficulty, and there are frequent disorders in the South. Then there are the conflicts of interest between the Eastern and Western States, very great conflicts and heartburnings. Then there are the alarming difficulties and complications arising from the inordinate political power which has been grasped by great corporations. And I think that the best and wisest minds in the United States have settled down to the conviction that the management of the United States, with its present territory is just as difficult a task as their best men can accomplish, and that it would not be wise to add to their existing complications and difficulties by any such unwieldy accession or unmanageable increase as this great domain, the larger half of the whole continent, would be. I think that among those circles in the United States which are to be looked to as influencing the future, there is a great modification of view on this point, and there would be,

even were we disposed, as I hope we shall never be disposed, to offer to join them, a great reluctance to take us. But I believe we have a future of our own here. My opinion coincides with those to which I have been referring in the United States. I believe that that country is even larger than it ought to be in order to be well governed, and that an extension of its territory would be very unfortunate in the interests of civilization. "Cribbed, cabined and confined" as we ourselves are to the South, by the unfortunate acts of English diplomatists in the past, giving up to the United States territory which, if we had it to-day, would make our future absolutely assured, but still retaining as we do the great North-West, I believe we can show that there is room and verge enough in North America for the maintenance of two distinct governments, and that there is nothing to be said in favour, but, on the contrary, everythtng to be said against the notion of annexation. These are the material reasons, independent altogether of the very strong and justly adverse feeling arising from our affection for and our association with England, and the well settled conviction which I believe exists among the people of this country that a Constitutional Monarchy is preferable to a Republican Government. The Monarchical Government of England is a truer application of real Republican principles than that of the United States, and I have no hesitation in saying that the Government of Canada is far in advance, in the application of real Republican principles, of the Government of either England or the United States. (Cheers.) But, with the very great advantages which we enjoy over that portion of our fellow-subjects living in England, by reason of our having come into a new country, having settled it for ourselves, and adapted our institutions to modern notions, by reason of our not being cumbered by the constitution of a legislative chamber on the hereditary principle, by reason of

our not being cumbered with an aristocracy, or with the unfortunate principle of primogeniture and the aggregation of the land in very few hands, by reason of our not being cumbered with the difficulties which must always exist where a community is composed of classes differing from one another in worldly circumstances so widely as the classes in England differ, where you can go into one street of the city of London and find the extreme of wealth, and a mile or two away the very extreme of poverty; living, as we do, in a country where these difficulties do not exist, where we early freed ourselves from the incubus of a State Church, where we early provided for the educational needs of our people, under these happy circumstances, with these great privileges, there are corresponding responsibilities. Much remains to be done even here before we can say that the ideal of true popular Government has been reached; and some mistakes have been made, in my poor judgment, in the course already taken. I do not believe it is consistent with the true notion of popular Government that we should have a Senate selected by the Administration of the day, and holding their seats for life. [Cheers.] I am not of those who would be disposed to abolish the Senate at this time. The Senate was supposed by those who framed the Constitution of the United States—to which we are bound to look as the framers of our Constitution looked—to be the representative of the various States as States, in which, being as States equal and co-ordinate sovereignties, they had, however unequal in their population and wealth, equal representation. That was the notion upon which, in the framing of that Constitution and in the framing of ours, a Senate was introduced. I am not prepared at this time to take the step of dispensing with the Senate. I desire to see a Senate selected upon truly popular principles, and in a way consistent with popular government, and I am inclined to believe that a Senate so selected would be a useful and influential body, and

might perhaps accomplish an important object by removing from the House of Commons the notion that the delegation in that body from each Province is to act as an isolated band in defence of Provincial rights and in assertion of Provincial interests. Is it consistent with the notion that the Senators should represent the several Provinces that they should be selected by one Government? We know that under our form of Government the Governor General has no controlling voice in the selection of these gentlemen, that the Cabinet recommend A or B to him, and he appoints him, or if he does not, his Ministers go out of office. The practical result is that the Ministry of the day name the Senators. They name them for life. They may possibly be very good and efficient men when they are placed in the Senate. But even so, they may become, as, I suppose, most of us will become some day, utterly effete, utterly incapable of discharging the duty for which they were selected, but so long as they can drag their weary limbs to Parliament once every second session, so long as they can be supported there, as I have seen them supported to the halls of Parliament to save their position, and sit for an hour so as to register their names, they hold their seats as Senators, and are supposed to represent the special interests of the Province for which they were selected. That is one evil, supposing the selections to have been such as ought to have been made in the first instance, but we all know they have not been such as a rule. If the members of the Senate are to be the guardians of the interests of the Provinces, it is the provincial mind which should be referred to as to their appointment, and my own opinion is that the Senate, besides being very largely reduced in number, should be composed of men selected either immediately or mediately by the Provinces from which they come. I believe in the mediate mode of selection; I think that the selection by the Legislature of the Province, and the appointment for moderate terms, not going out all together, but at different periods, would be a system under which that body

would obtain an importance and a value hardly dreamed of under the present system. You want that body not to change as rapidly as the popular body, not to be composed exactly of the same class of men, but to change from time to time. You do not want a set of old gentlemen there with notions of the time when they were appointed perhaps, but which have not advanced with the age, to be dreaming in the Senate, blocking improvements in legislation as far as they dare, and only conceding them under an extreme pressure of public opinion. (Hear, hear.) You want a body to which it would be an honor to send any of the principal men of a Province, and which would have an importance which the United States Senate once had, and, though the lustre has perhaps diminished, still to some extent retains. (Cheers.) I think, also, that something may still be done towards securing freedom and purity of election.

I am amongst those members of the Liberal party who are prepared to express their very great regret at the disclosures which have recently taken place in the Election Courts. From the earliest moment of my entrance into public life, I have taken a very earnest part in the effort to bring about freedom and purity of election. In these struggles I did not say that my friends of the Liberal party had never resorted to improper means for securing their elections—I said that you must not expect a different result when you enacted sham laws, professing to prohibit bribery and corruption, while you refused to provide proper means of enforcing those laws. I said that as long as it was seen that there was no means of carrying out these laws, the situation was worse than if there were no law, and both parties would go on disregarding the law, until it ended in the retirement of honest men as candidates for public life, and in the retirement from any participation in politics of those citizens whose notions of propriety, morality, and respect for the laws prohibited them from using such unlawful means. We were resisted both in the Local and Federal Legislatures as

long as resistance was feasible, but, fortunately for the Province, we were able to obtain a stringent law in Ontario before the elections of 1871, and the result was that those elections were infinitely purer than before. Though some of the elections were avoided for illegal practices, the sums spent were not large, the corruption was by no means widespread, and the election may be said to have been comparative fair. We were unable to get the law in the Dominion for the election of 1872. The country in that contest was flooded with money and I suppose it was the most corrupt election which ever took place in Canada. But public opinion was so strong on the subject that the Government which had refused to pass the law brought it in during the next session, and that law was in force when the elections of 1874 took place. I rejoice that it was so, and I repeat what I have said before, that I would not as a member of the Government have taken the responsibility of concurring in the dissolution of 1874, if that law had not been on the Statute Book. The result of the elections, as you are aware, was a very extraordinary victory of the Liberal party. A number of petitions have been presented, some on each side, and it has been found that no single election which has been brought before the judges was conducted properly according to the law. Although no candidate has been found guilty of any impropriety, it has been found that many men belonging to the Liberal party, and prominent in the electoral districts, so far forgot what was due to their country and to their party as to be engaged in the disposition of funds in an illegal manner. My own opinion, founded upon my knowledge of what took place in some cases, upon what has come out before the judges, and upon the fact that, though it was competent to each of the petitioners to ask not only that the seat should be voided but that the other candidate should be seated, if his hands were clean, none of them have dared to do so—is

that there was an equivelent or a larger amount of illegal expenditure on the other side. I have no doubt that if these gentlemen who are prosecuting those petitions with such energy—and I rejoice to see that energy displayed—had dared to say not merely—"You have been guilty of corruption," but "our candidate has not, and he can, therefore, take, and asks, the seat," they would have done so, because it is generally conceded that the verdict of the people on the new elections will be, as a rule, in favour of the unseated member; and these people, understanding that perfectly well, would be very glad to have their candidate seated by the decision of the judges rather than undergo a new election to receive another adverse verdict. I do not believe the result of the elections has been materially affected by the expenditure, but there is no doubt of the gross impropriety of the acts disclosed; and the only excuse for it that I can see is, that these gentlemen could not have fully realized that we had got the boon we had been struggling for, but thought the old corrupt course would be followed by the other side, and that whosoever won by any means would keep the seat In that case the results of these trials will have disabused the people of this country of any such idea. They will have found that we of the Liberal party who represented you in Parliament were not so recreant to our trust as to make an appeal to the country without a law which would be effective, and that we have got a law which will enable the people to conduct elections purely, and to punish those who are guilty of corruption. I have a good hope that what has taken place will produce a beneficial effect upon the men of both parties in the elections for the Local Legislature, and that we may then see an election even purer than that of 1871. I need not, I suppose, repeat to the people of this Riding the exhortation which I have addressed to other Ridings—the exhortation addressed to the

country generally by the Government through the address of Mr. Mackenzie before the late general election. I would point out to you that even a good law by which effective machinery is provided is almost useless unless the popular sense and feeling be committed to the support of it, and that the main force and efficiency of any such law is dependent upon the mind, the will, and the determination of the people to sustain the law and frown down those who transgress it. I hope the Liberal party of this Province will take that course I believe they will. I have a firm confidence that now, both sides having learned that there is a means by which corruption can be discovered, and that the discovery of that corruption practised by those who have acted with the concurrence of the candidate will destroy the illusory victory which has been gained, the axe has been laid at the root of the tree, and we shall have fair elections for the time to come. There is another improvement on the Statute Book of which we have not received the advantage yet. I mean the ballot. But I think that still further improvements might be achieved. I think every one will agree with me that one of the great difficulties in securing freedom of election in the past has been the reluctance of voters to go to the polls, the difficulty that was made about it, the compliment it was supposed to involve, and the attempt—too successful in many cases—to extort money as team-hire for going, when the voter ought to have been proud and happy to drive or walk, and if he had a team, while his neighbor had none, to take his neighbor as well, so as to strike his blow for the good cause. (Cheers.) I believe it is under the guise of hiring teams that bribery has to the greatest extent permeated the body of the electors. I believe that another system of bribery which has gained ground of late years is that of paying voters to abstain from voting. That is the system which is most likely to be resorted to under the ballot, for this reason: If you buy a man to stay at home, you can always tell

whether he has kept his bargain or not ; but if you buy him to vote for you, you cannot tell whether he has, because he may have voted against you. I am strongly impressed with the idea that some provision whereby voters should no longer imagine that they were to be invited, allured, complimented, attracted to the poll, their teams paid for, themselves solicited to go, would be a proper provision. Who are we who vote ? Is it a right only that we exercise, or a trust? We are but a very small proportion, perhaps not more than an eighth of the population, male and female, men, women and children. Is it in our own interests or for our own rights only that we vote? Are our own fates alone affected by our votes? Not so. The whole population of the country, our wives, our sisters, and our children, those male adults who have no votes,—all these are affected by it. Therefore it is a trust—a sacred trust—which the voter holds in the exercise of the franchise. True, it is a right, because the voter, in common with the rest of the community, is affected by the laws which are passed ; but he is bound to vote in the interests of the whole community ; and therefore I do not see why the Legislature should not point out to him that it is his duty, if he chooses to allow himself to remain on the register, to exercise the trust which he has undertaken. I would not go against any man's conscience. There may be some men, even in this country, of a peculiar persuasion, who hold it wrong to vote, but a provision permitting any man, upon his own application to the County Judge on the revision of the rolls, to be disfranchised, would get rid of any difficulties on the score of conscience. But if a man chooses that his name shall be retained on the list amongst the electoral body—which is itself a representative body, for these tens of thousands represent the hundreds of thousands for whom they vote and in effect legislate—then let him be told that it is his duty to exercise the franchise. I would not force him to vote for a particular person. He may say, "I do not like either of the men." A man may

be so crotchetty and difficult to please that he cannot make a choice between the candidates. We cannot help that; our ballot is secret; but let the voter, at all events, go to the booth and deposit his ballot. Whether it be a spoilt ballot or a blank ballot we shall not know, but I think it is likely that every man who goes to the booth will deposit an effective ballot. I think those who remain on the roll should be compelled by law to deposit their ballots, and that a law establishing some penalty for the breach of this provision, unless they excuse themselves by proof of illness or absence from the constituency, would be a good law, and as far as this branch of the subject is concerned, would tend largely to increase the virtue of our present electoral system. Besides a moderate penalty to be sued for, I would be disposed to add a provision that the man who had failed to vote at an election, whether general or special, and who within 30 days did not fyle a solemn declaration excusing himself upon one ground or the other, should not be entered upon the roll of voters again at any period until after the next general election, so that he should not be counted amongst the trustees of the popular right, for a certain period at any rate. (Cheers.) You know how difficult it is to get men to vote at a special election. Men are busy in their fields or about their affairs, and they forget, I am sorry to say, how very few hours in the year they, as self-governors, devote to the discharge of that highest and noblest privilege—the privilege of self-government. Let them understand, if at an election they prefer their business, their pleasure, or their occupations to the exercise of the franchise, that until after the next general election at any rate, they who have been proved to be unfaithful guardians, and have shown their little regard for the rights and privileges they hold, shall have no further concern or part in these matters, and shall leave to the faithful trustees the control which is theirs by right. (Hear, hear.)

It may be said, "You are proposing a law which will bring forward a number of persons who do not care about politics, and whom it is better not to have at the polls," but it is my object to prevent their being brought forward by improper means. A great many of them are brought forward now. The corrupt man says, "I cannot go, I cannot afford the time." He does it to get a few dollars. The indifferent men—and there are many of them of a highly respectable class—should be made to see that it is part of their duty to vote. Once they understand that it is their duty to take part in elections, I believe they are moral enough and conscientious enough to take that part, and I believe it will be taken generally for the good of the country. I am sure you will agree with me that a proposal which is calculated to poll out the popular vote to the utmost extent is a proposal in the interest of real popular Government. There is much more likely to be a true expression of the people's feelings in that than in any other way. I do not intend to detain you with any remarks upon the general abstract question of the franchise. My own opinions on that subject I may perhaps give some other day. I may say that however little the present character of our franchise answers the theoretical views and principles of some, there is no doubt that as a practical measure, in its actual working it does give the vote to such a large proportion of the people of this Province that the popular vote fully polled and rightly counted would be a fairly accurate exposition of the popular opinion; but I believe that even without attempting radical changes, without attempting to lay down a principle for the franchise more satisfactory than that which now prevails, there may be some practical reforms in the present system. I shall limit myself to two. You are aware that the general franchise is based upon the ownership or tenancy or occupation of real property of certain values. Now, it is deeply to be

regretted, on many grounds, that the rural communities of this Province do not determine, once for all, to do away with the false and injurious system of under-assessing property which prevails amongst them. (Cheers.) I have said in the Legislature, and I repeat here, that it is a disgrace to the people of Ontario that we should find the vast mass of our property deliberately under-assessed forty, perhaps fifty, per cent. by officers sworn to assess it up to its full value—(hear, hear)—and this with the concurrence of those whom you place in power. It is done, in fact, because your councillors sanction it, and sometimes even so instruct the assessors. It is generally a miserable, short-sighted attempt to procure a favorable equalization of the county rate. A township thinks if its property is under-assessed no other township will get an advantage over it, and so you have a system which is dishonest, which is a fraud on the face of it, and which, apart from its moral degradation, is injurious to the interests of the Province, because it keeps back from the knowledge of the people of England and of the world what our property is really worth. You tell them it is worth so many millions when the value might be truly doubled. It is injurious because such a system, artificial as it is, renders much more difficult a fair and equitable adjustment. In my city we are taxed very heavily, and we have found that the true course is to assess the property up to its full value, as that is the way in which every man is most likely to pay his fair share. But when you establish a fictitious basis, there are immense facilities for fraud and enormous difficulties in the way of a fair adjustment. More, it gives opportunities to partizan assessors which they could not have under a proper system, because if you bring down the assesment fifty per cent, you may bring it down to the margin of the qualification, while if you have a fair valuation there would not be a man who would not be entitled to vote on any cottage or plot

of land on which he lives. But when you under-assess you give the opportunity for fraud. I have seen a column of lots assessed at $190, and another column assessed at $210. What did that mean? Why, we all know that it meant simply that the $190 men were all of one stripe of politics and the $210 men of the other stripe. (Cheers and laughter.) The thing would have been quite out of the question if you had determined to make your assessors assess justly and rightly. There is no use in passing laws if the people will not support them. You have the law, but so long as you instruct or wink at your assessor in doing this, or do not dismiss him for doing it, so long the law will be violated. (Hear, hear.) I mentioned in the Legislative Assembly my feeling of humiliation at this state of things, my hope that it would be amended, and my view that if so there would be no ground on that score for a change in the franchise. But in the class of householders it might be well to get rid at once of all that difficulty by prescribing that the simple occupation as a householder should give the vote. This is, in fact, a very old franchise in England, and can do no harm but would do some good here. Then there is another thing. There is a custom in this country, which cannot, I think, be too highly commended—there is a custom among those farmers who have raised a family of retaining one or two of their sons on the farm. They live there with the expectation that when the inevitable day arrives, the faithful son who has done his duty by his parent, has soothed his declining years, has worked for him as he was worked for in the days when he was a child and helpless, and his father was strong, will inherit the farm. That is a state of things which is highly desirable and should be perpetuated. That degree of mutual confidence, that pleasant continuance of the family life after the son has attained to manhood, is a matter of great importance to the moral standing and virtue of the people at large. It is my opinion, that such adult sons would make as good a class

of voters as you can find in the country. (Hear, hear.) I believe some of them leave the farms and discontinue that state of things, because they desire to wear that badge of manhood—the franchise. I do not see why they should not wear that badge. I do not see why they should be penalized—educated as they are under our school system, and showing themselves to be alive to one of the highest duties of citizenship—by being excluded from the privilege. It would, I think, be well, when dealing with a system of representation which is not theoretically correct, a system which you cannot logically defend, but which you say works practically, to extend the franchise and give the right to vote to every adult son who is living on the farm of his father. (Cheers.) You know that such votes have been obtained in the past by a process which I regret. By an evasion of the law, fathers have placed their sons on the roll, and they have obtained votes by a side wind. That is unfortunate, because it is against the law, and because such a vote is not held freely; but, to a great extent, at the pleasure of the father. I do not care that a man should have the right to vote if I, or some one else, may tell him how he must vote. Give these men the right, and their votes will, especially under the ballot, be as free and as useful to the community as any others in the country. Before passing from this subject, I desire to speak of one of the truest tests of the right to the franchise—I mean the educational test. There is no doubt that our future will be largely affected by the course we take with regard to the extension of education throughout the land. I agree with many of the remarks of Mr. Mowat on that subject. I commend heartily the public spirit which has led the people of this country to expend such large sums on education; but my information leads me to believe that the people have not done all that they ought to have done. It is not only expenditure which is needed, but it is equally important to take care that when you have the schools, you send your children to them for a proper portion of the year. Then

you cannot get good work without reasonable pay. You have improved considerably the rate of pay of your teachers in the last few years. Three or four years ago, after investigating that subject, I spoke to my own constituents upon it, and I say now again, that if you want to make all this expenditure effectual, it is a prime duty to consider how much is required in order to obtain a good teacher, and to pay that sum whatever it may be. Without that the whole system is ineffective. The teacher is the key. To what purpose do you build brick school-houses, elect trustees, and send your children to school, unless you have an efficient teacher to instruct them? And you cannot get good teachers at the present rate of pay, increased though it is. Another point is this. In old and well-settled counties, where the farms are cleared and the men have become wealthy, where there is no reason, no necessity for the children being kept at home, how is it that the average period of attendance is so short? In some parts the shortness of the average attendance is positively alarming. I exhort my fellow-countrymen to see to these things. You have established free schools and you have resolved to tax everyone to maintain them. We are all interested then in this matter, and it is to the general and wide diffusion of instruction and education that we must largely look for the great future that we expect. But, sir, with such a hope for the future before us, I believe we might effect immense improvements upon the present system of popular representation. For my own part, I have been for some time dissatisfied with our present mode of popular representation, as furnishing no fair indication of the opinions of the country. I do not think a system under which a majority in one constituency elects a member, the minority being hopeless, helpless, without any representation of its own at all, is a good system. I have been collecting some statistics on this subject, and it is extraordinary to what extent the popular voice, as

shown in the popular vote, differs from the expression of that voice in the Legislature. In the State of Maryland you find an election lately in which parties were so divided that two-thirds of the people polled on the one side and one-third on the other. The result of the election was that the Republicans, who polled two-thirds elected every member, and the Democrats, who polled one-third, did not elect a single man. That was not a fair or reasonable result. In the State of Maine something of the same kind happened. The Democrats had polled one-third of the votes, but only elected 43 out of 247 members. Coming nearer home, for perhaps our Tory friends will object to my taking illustrations from accross the line, in Nova Scotia, in the year 1867, there was a bitterly-fought contest on the question of Union or anti-Union. The result was that only Mr. Tupper was returned from the whole Province, and that by a very narrow majority, as a representative of the Union sentiment. I have analyzed the statistics of that election, and I find that the real strength exhibited at the polls, would have given, as nearly as I can estimate, seven to the Union side instead of one, and only twelve to the anti-Unionists instead of 18. Take Nova Scotia again in 1874. The returns gave 19 to the Government, one Independent, and one Opposition—Mr. Tupper again. I will give him the Independent man into the bargain, because I think he belongs to that quarter. (Laughter.) The popular vote on that occasion would, as nearly as I can judge, have given 8 out of the 21 to that side instead of 2, and but 13 to the Government instead of 19. Our principle of Government is that the majority must decide. Upon what is it founded? Well, you cannot give a reason except this, that it is necessary. It is the only way in which Government can be carried on at all. But if the minority must, on this ground of necessity, bow to the voice of the majority, the majority is all the more bound to see that the minority has its

fair share of representation—its fair weight in the councils of the country. The majority must recollect that it may become the minority one day, and that then it would like to have its fair share in those councils, and such disparities as these are not likely to induce a feeling of cheerful submission on the part of the minority. In Ontario, in the election of 1867—I cannot, of course, be precisely accurate in these matters, because there were some acclamation returns, and there are other difficulties in making an exact calculation—but there were eighty-two members to be returned. The whole popular vote would have resulted in a slight majority for the Liberal party over the Government, but, discarding fractions, the result would give forty-one members to each. The Government, however, carried forty-nine seats to thirty-three, and so the Liberal party did not obtain its fair share in the Government of the country. A turn of 408 votes would have taken seventeen seats from the Government and given them to the Liberal party. We say we have representation by population, but we have not representation by population unless the population has a representation in the Legislature equivalent to its strength at the polls. In the late election of 1874, the popular voice, although very strongly in favor of the Government, was by no means so decided as the returns showed. And besides this, 178 votes turned the other way would have changed eight seats, making a difference of sixteen on a division. Little more than double that number would have changed sixteen seats, or thirty-two on a division, and this in a Province where over 200,000 votes would, if all the elections were contested, have been polled. My own opinion is, that it is not houses, and stocks, and farms that are represented, but human beings, with immortal souls—these are the true subjects of representation, the sharers in, the owners of, political power; and I think a scheme ought to be devised, as a scheme has been devised, to give them a fairer representation. In England, in constituencies which return three or four members, a cumbrous mode has been adopted called the "restrictive vote," which I do not recommend, by which each man votes for one less than the whole

number to be elected. That gives some representation to each side. In the School Board elections, which have caused the greatest possible interest and excitement, and have resulted in London in the return of an Educational Parliament which may vie with the Parliament of the Empire in ability in proportion to its numbers, the cumulative system has been with great advantage adopted. By this, the voter, having as many votes as there are members, may give the whole of his votes to one candidate or divide them as he pleases. That system has been also adopted with the most beneficial results in the State of Illinois, where the returns, under the amended Constitution of 1870, have been within one of the actual popular voice. I say the system of representation under which we now live is inadequate to the purposes of the age. The complicated interests of society, the various views entertained by various sections of people, the enormous divergencies and the minor shades of divergency which exist, the fact that you cannot accurately or reasonably approximate the real strength of popular opinion as evinced at the polls by the return of members to Parliament. These considerations are sufficient to condemn the existing system and send us on search for a better. That better can, I believe, be found; and if it be reserved for this Province or this Dominion to set the example of finding it, a great benefit will have been conferred by us on the cause of freedom throughout the world. I believe Mr. Hare's system or some modification of it—a system by which each voter may vote for any one he pleases, and give his vote, should it not be required for his first choice, to second, third or fourth candidates, in the order of his preference—would result in the return by unanimous constituencies of men having the confidence of those constituencies, and of just so many men on each side as the strength of that side at the polls would justify. What is my position to-day? I have a very large constituency. I represent a constituency in which many more votes were polled against me than sufficed to return Mr. Dymond. Within nine of two thousand votes were polled against me. Can I say I represent those people? I do not. I do not represent their views. They thought I was wrong; they wished to defeat me; thay wished to condone the Pacific Scandal and to support the late Government. I am bound to consider their individual wants, but I cannot say I represent their views. How are they represented? Some will say that people a long way off elected, say, Mr. Cameron, of Cardwell, or Mr. Farrow, of North Huron, to represent them. That is a very peculiar mode of representation, by which the unrepresented minorities of adverse

views in different constituencies are, in effect, told that they are to be content because there are others in like evil plight. Look at home. Turn to this Metropolitan district. Take, if you please, the old County of York, including Toronto, Ontario and Peel You have there nine districts, and you have nine members all on one side, and not a single one on the other. The return at the polls gave five to four. The popular vote gave you five and your adversaries four, and upon a proper system of representation, that would have been the proportion of the members. We shall have to settle before long the question of the Parliamentary system of the future. As the late Prince Consort said some years ago, Parliamentary systems are on their trial. When we provide a plan by which every man shall be represented, by which each side of opinion shall be represented, in proportion to its strength, we shall have avoided the difficulties which result from the artificial divisions which we make, and which render the expression of opinion by the returns so essentially different from that shown at the polls. There is not time now to give you even a fair summary of the reasons for this reform. I must bring my speech to a close. I know, Sir, that I have made a rather disturbing speech, but I am not afraid of that. As far as I can judge, not much good can be done without disturbing something or somebody, and if that is the only objection to be made to the sentiments I have uttered, I am quite ready to meet it. I may be said also to have made an imprudent speech—at least it might be said if I were one of those who aspire to lead their fellow-countrymen as Ministers. It is the function of Ministers—we know it, and I do not quarrel with it—to say nothing that can be caught hold of—(laughter)—nothing in advance of the popular opinion of the day, to watch the current of that opinion, and when it has gathered strength to crystalize it into Acts of Parliament. That is the function of a Liberal Minister. The function of a Tory Minister is to wait till he is absolutely forced to swallow his own opinions. (Laughter.) My hon. friend Mr. Mowat will, I doubt not, by your suffrages, enjoy a long time in which to perform his high duty, but it may be permitted to one who prefers to be a private in the advanced guard of the army of freedom to a commanding place in the main body—(loud cheers)—to run the risk of promulgating what may be called a political heresy to-day, but may perhaps become a political creed to-morrow. (Cheers.) I am sure that whatever may be your disposition as to the opinions I have advanced, and however disinclined you may be to

accept my proposals, you will receive them with toleration and liberality. I believe that feeling which is strongly existent in the ranks of our opponents, of intolerance of any difference of opinion, that determination without argument to write and speak down the man who advances anything new as revolutionary and unsafe, is not shared by the Liberal party. I believe you realize the value in the interests of true liberty of a free utterance before his fellow-countrymen of the distinctive opinions held by a public man. (Cheers.) I am quite sure you sympathize with the eulogy which the poet-laureate of England conferred upon the old land, and you desire that his words of praise should be properly applicable to the new, when in immortal verse he sung :—

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas ?

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will.

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent.

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute.

Tho' Power shall make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should almost choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.